Learning from political economy – using Laclau & Mouffet and Hardt & Negri in career guidance practice

Type of paper: Paper

Title: Learning from political economy – using Laclau & Mouffet and Hardt & Negri in career guidance practice

Abstract
This paper looks at what can be learnt by career guidance from the field of political economy. It will argue that the field has been unjustly neglected by scholars of career and career guidance and that its focus on agency and the capacity to bring about change is actually a good fit with the field of career guidance, particularly where career guidance seeks to adopt a more critical or social justice infused stance. It will argue that the work of Laclau & Moffet and Hardt & Negri offer a particularly fertile source for rethinking the field of career guidance.

Overview
Career guidance is often described as a multi-disciplinary field of enquiry which draws on disciplines such as education, psychology, sociology, business and labour market economics. As the field becomes increasingly interested in political agency and social justice (e.g. Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2018; 2019) I believe that there would be value in it engaging more substantially with political economy as an important contributing discipline. Political economy offers a useful base for thinking about career guidance because it is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between the world as it is and as it could be. Political economists are interested in the possibilities for political agency and change in a way that is highly complementary with career guidance’s interest in individual agency and change.

In this paper I will draw on the work of two groups of post-Marxist/Gramscian theorists. I will argue that some of the key concepts of Laclau & Moffet (e.g. Laclau, 2012; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014; Mouffe, 2018) and Hardt & Negri (e.g. Hardt & Negri, 2001; 2005; 2017) can be borrowed and repurposed for those seeking to create emancipatory forms of career guidance. In particular key concepts like: hegemony; strategy; the people; radical democracy; Empire; the multitude; singularity; and the common. I will show how these concepts can be use to inform both the forms that career guidance takes and the content on which it focuses.

References


